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Minister Supports Province's Public Libraries

The Provincial Government's support for public libraries was highlighted today at the launch of the Public Information and Library Resources Board's (PILRB) new promotional campaign. Included in the campaign is a new logo, promotional video, website and library card, all of which are designed to give a fresh new look to libraries throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

"Libraries contribute to the social and economic development of our province," said the Honourable Joan Burke, Minister of Education. "They play a key role in advancing education, literacy and rural development. We certainly value this contribution and have substantially increased funding to allow our libraries to grow and expand."

The Williams Government has increased investments in libraries to $9.3 million annually. This year, an additional $385,000 was provided for initiatives such as facility upgrades, pre-school literacy programming and training for volunteer board trustees. In addition, the Provincial Government provided $300,000 to the Labrador West library for infrastructure improvements. Last year, $250,000 was provided to extend hours of operation at 47 sites throughout the province.

There are 96 public libraries in Newfoundland and Labrador, resulting in 85 per cent of the population having direct access to a library. There are more provincial libraries per capita in Newfoundland and Labrador than any other province in Canada. Minister Burke noted libraries offer public Internet access, specialized collections including DVDs and videos, business directories, and in some instances, digital camera and laptop computers. Libraries are able to assist students with school projects, provide hardware and software for growing businesses, and help strengthen provincial literacy rates.

"The Williams Government views the public library system as an integral part of the education system," Minister Burke concluded. "It is through education that the people of our province will acquire the skills necessary to contribute to their communities and grow the economy. Library boards and staff work hard every day to ensure our libraries offer relevant resources and services to the people they serve. I commend the library board for undertaking this promotional campaign which will help raise awareness and introduce libraries to more families and young people. In today's age, libraries are far more than a place to borrow a good book, and this is the perfect time to discover exactly how libraries can help clients learn and grow."

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